SO WHAT IS THIS SKILLS BASED ASSIGNMENT STUFF?

The term "Skill Based Assignments" has been used in several recent messages and notes. The Future Force 21 ALCOAST 077/01 notes that "studies such as the Joint Rating Review, Buoy Tender Systems Study, and Project Kimball each underscore the need to better include the skills possessed by Coast Guard members into the factors that make up accession, assignment, and training decisions." The Joint Rating Review ALCOAST 110/01 also conveys the Commandant's decision to "continue efforts to transition to an assignment process which considers skills and qualifications as a critical factor in each assignment decision. Assignment Priority will remain an important factor when selecting members for transfer." **This Flag Voice discusses Skill Based Assignments and what is planned for the coming assignment year.**

What is NOT changing .....

First of all, some important factors in today's assignment process will not change. **Assignment Priority and Member Assignment Data Cards will remain important factors for assignments.**

What is a 'Skill Based Assignment?'

Every CG unit needs as many personnel as possible to arrive with the right qualifications and skills. This is especially true as we move more and more towards 'optimally crewed' units where we require 100% of the people, 100% of the time with 100% of the qualifications -- nothing less will do without seriously degrading readiness and mission performance. In an effort to meet that need, Assignment Officers attempt to match up member skills with billet requirements. They do that today by considering a member's career history, existing qualifications on record, and other information as available. The Assignment Officers also use what they know of the skills required for each billet, usually determined informally - through the Assignment Officers' experience or through Command input. **Our current system for recording member skills is out of date.** The Enlisted Qualification Codes Manual (COMDTINST M1414.9A) is dated 24 DEC 91, and has been updated only a few times since that time.

The Skill Based Assignments initiative takes today's deficient process, operating best it can on inadequate information, and makes it systematic and equitable for all**. By having better information on what skills and qualifications members have and what is needed, we provide the Assignment Officers the means to make decisions.** The objective is to have an assignment system that allows us to best manage the Coast Guard's "human capital."

What will change? What is the plan?

During Assignment Year 2002, we will take the first steps towards improving how we track member skills and match these skills to positions. The initial effort will focus on the Aviation, TC and TT ratings. TC and TT ratings are involved because they will be the first to indicate their preference of new ratings under the Joint Rating Review (JRR), and the qual codes for these ratings needed revision. The Aviation ratings are involved since they have been actively using skill information in the assignment process for many years. The effort to capture member qualifications will follow the following process:

> **April 2001**: Affected Rating Force Master Chiefs (G-SRF) have finished the review of the competencies for the Aviation, TC and TT ratings. New competencies and eligibility requirements will be promulgated by ALCOAST. The new codes will focus on the skills required by these ratings today, and will prepare the way for the new IT and OS ratings. The Aviation qual codes we track for the AMT and AVT ratings will also be updated based on the Aviation Workforce Restructuring.

> **May 2001**: Affected Rating Force Master Chiefs will work with the field units to identify the quals held by individuals. G-SRF has developed a web site http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-w/jrr/sba where members will enter the quals they have earned. The quals will then be entered into CGHRMS (PeopleSoft) as "competencies." Details will be passed by an ALCGENL message.

> **May/June 2001**: Competencies required by units will be entered into CGHRMS. The identification of required competencies will be made by Program managers and Rating Force Master Chiefs, with field consultation. For some units, competencies required are defined already in directives such as the Cutter Training and Qualification Manual.

> **September 2001**: TCs and TTs will check and certify their competencies along with the Personnel Data Extract for the November Service-Wide Exam.

In Assignment Year 2002, we envision that the changes in the assignment process will be minimal. The goals of the 2002 effort are to develop data and measures on how the assignment system works today. We will develop these data and measures so that we understand the system better, and so we can better determine how to craft improvements to the system. We will develop these data and measures for the TC, TT and Aviation ratings. **The lessons that we learn in 2002 will be used as competency updates and as Skill Based Assignments expands in following years.**

Questions and Answers:

> Q: The Qual Code system has been inaccurate for many years. If we do all this work to renew the qual codes for billets and the qual codes for members, will it be kept current?

A: Member quals and billet requirements are being added as assignment factors. In the past, data was added to the qual codes system, and it wasn't used in most cases. **With the increasing demands for fully qualified people to perform the ever increasingly complex jobs throughout our Service, competency information will be essential in the future.** This in itself will be a reason to keep competency information up to date.

Q: The station community is entering competency information into Training Management Tool (TMT). How does this relate to Skill Based Assignments?

A: TMT information will be cross-walked into CGHRMS as these systems mature, and will be used as Skill Based Assignments expands. The initial efforts to use TMT are in the shore based operational units. These units have few TCs or TTs on their Personnel Allowance. We are using the information collected in the JRR implementation planning, plus the Cutter Training and Qualifications Manual as some of the inputs for the skills needed at units.

Q: My skills and qual codes relate to shipboard equipment. Does this mean that I'll be at sea for the rest of my career?

A: We are NOT changing or doing away with assignment priorities. **While skills will take on increased importance, assignment priority and preference will continue to ensure that you have choice when it comes to assignments following your sea tours.** As the Commandant said in the Future Force 21 ALCOAST, we are seeking a balanced approach. Sea duty and the assignment that follows is an important part of that balance.

Web Sites:

Future Force 21: http://www.uscg.mil/ff21/

Joint Rating Review: http://www.uscg.mil/HQ/G-W/JRR/

Stay Coastie: http://www.uscg.mil/staycoastie/homepage.htm

Regards, FL Ames

Flag Voice Contents
This page is maintained by HR Webmaster (CG-1A)